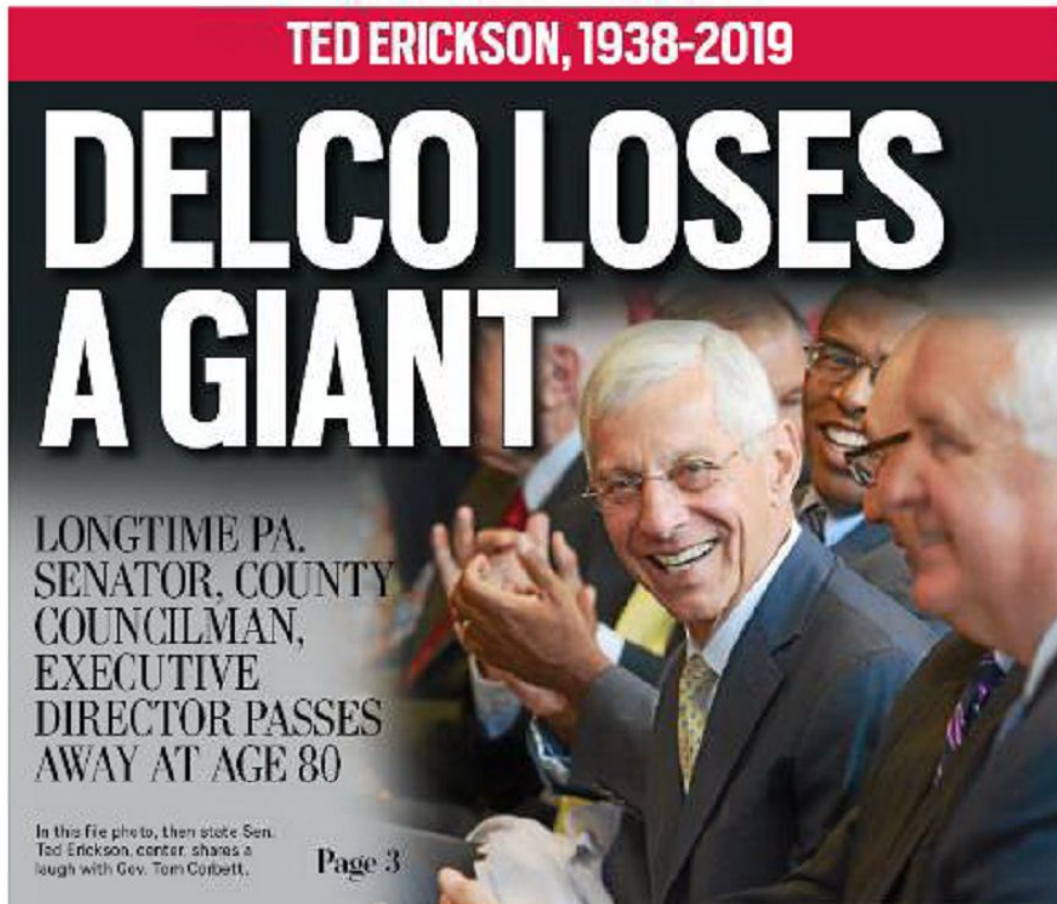


https://www.delcotimes.com/news/local/former-state-senator-ted-erickson-dies-at/article_67aee34c-137a-11e9-b4d6-7bacddaeaad2.html

FEATURED

Former state senator Ted Erickson dies at 80

By Kathleen E. Carey 8 hrs ago



Delaware County flags have been lowered to half staff in honor of a retired state senator who was remembered as a respectful gentleman who helped shape the county to prepare it for the future.

Former state Sen. Edwin "Ted" Erickson, R-26 of Newtown, a longtime fixture in Delaware County government and politics, died Monday. The 80-year-old won a special election for the state Senate's 26th District in 2001 and served until his 2014 retirement. He also had served as executive director of Delaware County from 1992 to 2001.

"Over a period of 20 years, he served as an elected official, chairman of (county) council and the executive director," Delaware County Council Chairman John McBlain said. "He really helped form and guide the county ... I think he guided the county towards the end of the 20th century and positioned us for the 21st century."

Southeast Republican Caucus Chairman and Delaware County Republican Party Chairman Andrew Reilly recalled the senator.

"Sen. Erickson was a great student of government and had served in many governmental roles in his distinguished career," Reilly said. "He enjoyed thinking through government problems to bring forth the best solutions for Delaware county residents. He was true public servant ."

Delaware County Executive Director Marianne Grace took over the position Erickson held after he was elected to the Senate.

"For me, Ted was very calming, quiet," she said. "He's really a loss. He's really such a dedicated public servant ... I think everybody feels sad about it. It certainly happens to everybody but this feels sad."

She shared an anecdote from when she was transitioning into her new position.

"When I started this position, the training that I got from Ted was that he said, 'You can do this job,'" she said. "It was that kind of confidence. There were no extraneous words that needed to be said. He always had the right thing to say."

Both she and McBlain likened him to former President George H.W. Bush.

"We walk about people that were gentlemen from that group of people," Grace said, noting their respect and focus and ability to do the right thing and navigate difficult waters. "We all need those kind of role models. We all need to try to emulate them. "

McBlain, who ordered the flag lowering through Erickson's services, shared a similar sentiment.

"He's from a different time," he said. "I think you'll find on both sides of the aisle, people have nothing but good words to say about Ted Erickson. Ted was very much liked by all."

But the retired senator was strong in his convictions.

"He was a gentleman," McBlain said. "He sharply disagreed with people, he was no pushover. He was very opinionated and had very strong beliefs and feelings. How he went about dealing with those with his colleagues was professional. Even when he was losing his temper, he did it in a very professional way. I'm not sure I ever heard a profane word come out of his mouth."

The council chairman spoke of the resource Erickson was.

"Ted was someone who was very environmentally conscious," McBlain said, adding that he helped guide the policy behind DELCORA and the county's solid waste handling for years. "He was always somebody who was helpful because many problems in county government were cyclical."

Even as recently as last month, Erickson advocated on behalf of the environment as he wrote a guest column in the *Delaware County Daily Times* on what can be done to mitigate the effects of climate change.

It was his concern for the environment where he began his professional career.

In 1960, he received an undergraduate degree in biology and chemistry from Albright College. He then taught general biology, anatomy and physiology, cell physiology and zoology at Drexel University and East Stroudsburg State College.

In 1969, he earned a doctorate in biochemistry and microbiology from Bryn Mawr College. From then through 1973, he was a tenured assistant professor of biology at Hamilton College in northern New York.

He also was a former member of the Army Science Board, where he served as an advisor to the U.S. Army on scientific and technological matters.

After his Hamilton position, he returned home to serve as director of public health and then chief administrative officer of Upper Darby Township. In 1982, he was elected to Delaware County Council, and served as its chairman from 1987 to 1989.

After that, his focus combined these two facets of his career as he served as Regional Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III. There, he oversaw a workforce of nearly 1,000 people in an area that included Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

He returned to Delaware County as its executive director from 1992 through 2001, when he won the special election to fill the unexpired term of F. Joseph Loeper, who resigned after pleading guilty to falsifying tax documents.

While in the Senate, Erickson served on a variety of committees and caucuses and was chairman of the Senate Majority Policy Committee and vice chairman of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee.

As word of his death became known, condolences were appearing throughout social media.

"Today we learned of the passing of retired state Sen. Ted Erickson," Upper Darby GOP wrote. "Ted was a true public servant who loved serving the residents of Delaware and Chester counties.

"Anyone that knew Ted knows that he was a gentleman and well respected across Pennsylvania," they continued.

McBlain remembered the lunch club Erickson kept where four or five people would meet about once a month at one of a few rotating Media sandwich shops.

"Ted throughout his career always had a lunch crowd," he said. "I was lucky to be included in it in the last five or 10 years ... We would get together. We would talk about a mix of government politics, our world views, sports. We shared a lot of laughs."

McBlain said the last time he saw Erickson was right before Thanksgiving and the two talked about the proposed county tax decrease.

"He thought it was a great idea," the chairman chuckled. Perhaps a feat, coming from someone McBlain said was fiscally conservative and very intricately involved in budgets."

McBlain said Erickson also was concerned about human services and was driven for that work to continue.

"He was very much a policy-driven person," McBlain said. "He didn't just make sure that the 4 o'clock trains ran on time, he wanted to make sure we had the best locomotives to run those trains. I think he was really conscientious of the health, safety and welfare of the residents. I think that will be his hallmark."

The chairman spoke of the impact Erickson made.

"Delaware County and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania were better because of him and will be poorer now that he is not here," McBlain wrote in his Facebook post honoring the late senator.

"Godspeed, Ted."

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